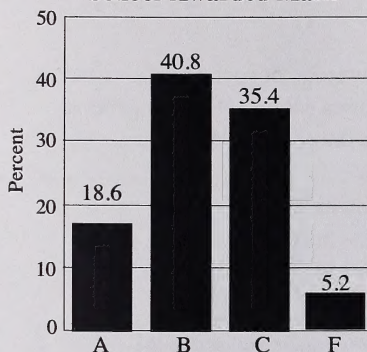


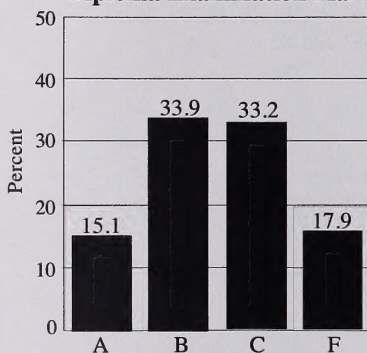
Social Studies 30

Diploma Examination Results Examiners' Report for January 1995

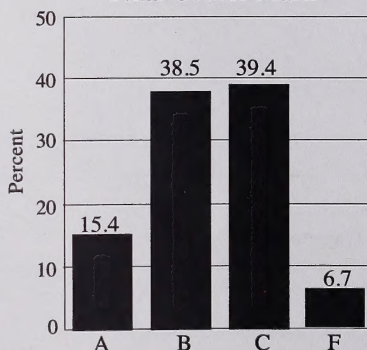
School-Awarded Mark



Diploma Examination Mark



Final Course Mark



The summary information in this report provides teachers, school administrators, students, and the general public with an overview of results from the January 1995 administration of the Social Studies 30 Diploma Examination. This information is most helpful when used in conjunction with the detailed school and jurisdiction reports that have been mailed to schools and school jurisdiction offices. An annual provincial report containing a detailed analysis of the combined January, June, and August results is published each year.

Description of the Examination

The Social Studies 30 Diploma Examination consists of two parts: a multiple-choice section worth 70% and a written-response section worth 30% of the total examination mark.

Achievement of Standards

The information reported is based on the final course marks achieved by 8 398 students who wrote the January 1995 examination.

- 93.3% of these students achieved the acceptable standard (a final course mark of 50% or higher).
- 15.4% of these students achieved the standard of excellence (a final course mark of 80% or higher).

Overall, student achievement in Social Studies 30 was satisfactory. Students demonstrated a good grasp of social studies knowledge. In composing their essays, many students were able to express a clear understanding of the issue under discussion and were more aware of how to develop and organize an argumentative paper. Many students also used the discretionary half-hour of writing time to plan, edit, and proofread their written work.

Provincial Averages

- The average school-awarded mark was 67.4%.
- The average diploma examination mark was 63.7%.
- The average final course mark, representing an equal weighting of the school-awarded mark and the diploma examination mark, was 65.9%.

Part A: Multiple Choice

Examination Blueprint

Part A: Multiple Choice has a value of 70 marks, one mark for each multiple-choice question. Each question is classified in two ways: according to the curricular content area (topic) being tested and according to the knowledge and skill objectives required to answer the question. The examination blueprint illustrates the distribution of questions in January 1995 according to these classifications.

All questions on the diploma examination require students to demonstrate knowledge of social studies content and to apply social studies skills to that knowledge base. The reporting categories below define the general types of questions that appear on the examination and the categories for which information is reported.

		Question Classification by Topic		Total Questions
		Topic A: Political and Economic Systems	Topic B: Global Interaction in the 20th Century	
		Knowledge and application of facts, concepts, and generalizations related to the world's political and economic systems as outlined in the <i>Program of Studies</i> .	Knowledge and application of facts, concepts, and generalizations related to the interaction of nations since 1918 as outlined in the <i>Program of Studies</i> .	
Question Classification by Knowledge and Skill Objectives	Comprehension of Information and Ideas These questions require students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of generalizations, key concepts, and facts related to social studies content.	1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 14, 21, 28, 29, 30, 31, 35	39, 40, 41, 45, 46, 52, 54, 56, 57, 67, 68, 70	24
	Interpretation and Analysis of Information and Ideas These questions require students to demonstrate their knowledge of social studies content by interpreting and analyzing information and ideas.	6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 18, 19, 26, 27, 33, 34	36, 37, 38, 42, 43, 47, 48, 49, 60, 61, 64, 65	23
	Synthesis and Evaluation of Information and Ideas These questions require students to demonstrate and apply their knowledge of social studies content by synthesizing information and ideas and evaluating their accuracy and worth.	5, 9, 13, 15, 16, 17, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 32	44, 50, 51, 53, 55, 58, 59, 62, 63, 66, 69	23
	Total Questions	35	35	70

Subtest Results*

Results are reported in average raw scores.

Total Part A: 46.5 out of 70.

by Topic

- Political and Economic Systems: 22.8 out of 35
- Global Interaction in the 20th Century: 23.7 out of 35

by Knowledge and Skill Objectives

- Comprehension of Information and Ideas: 15.2 out of 24
- Interpretation and Analysis of Information and Ideas: 16.1 out of 24
- Synthesis and Evaluation of Information and Ideas: 15.1 out of 22

*Readers are cautioned **not** to compare subtest results because the subtests are not of equal difficulty. Instead, readers should compare these provincial subtest results with their own school results.

Question-by-Question Results

Question	Key	Difficulty*
1	D	67.8
2	B	56.5
3	D	74.0
4	A	67.5
5	C	86.6
6	D	60.6
7	A	69.8
8	A	91.5
9	B	67.3
10	B	62.1
11	A	62.4
12	D	52.5
13	B	64.1
14	C	54.9
15	D	57.0
16	B	55.9
17	D	83.9
18	B	73.4
19	A	57.7
20	D	77.0
21	C	60.6
22	B	55.1
23	A	69.2
24	D	66.0
25	B	66.3
26	B	72.7
27	C	68.8
28	C	48.7
29	B	56.5
30	D	68.6
31	A	55.0
32	D	44.6
33	D	77.3
34	B	48.5
35	C	78.2
36	D	57.1
37	C	70.2
38	D	75.5
39	B	74.3
40	A	64.9
41	C	37.8
42	C	75.0
43	B	73.3
44	C	70.4
45	D	66.0
46	A	67.4
47	A	78.5
48	D	73.2
49	B	63.2
50	A	50.3
51	B	49.4
52	C	72.8
53	B	54.6
54	A	71.2
55	A	76.7
56	D	55.9
57	B	77.2
58	C	79.6
59	D	66.4
60	A	76.8
61	D	77.0
62	B	70.1
63	A	60.2
64	C	81.1
65	D	80.2
66	A	62.0
67	B	56.4
68	D	64.6
69	A	82.0
70	C	55.9

*Difficulty—percentage of students answering the question correctly

The table at the left shows question-by-question results and the keyed answers. Parallel tables in the school and jurisdiction reports show the percentage of students who selected each alternative. By comparing school and jurisdiction results with provincial results presented here, teachers can determine areas of strength and weakness in the achievement of their students and, consequently, areas of potential strength and weakness in their programs.

Examiners' Comments

The multiple-choice section of the examination requires students to go beyond simply recalling information and to apply their knowledge and thinking skills. Students must demonstrate that they understand social studies concepts; that they comprehend historical, political, and economic relationships; and that they can interpret and evaluate social studies information and ideas.

During the marking session, a committee of five classroom teachers of Social Studies 30 reviewed Part A to determine whether the standards embedded in the multiple-choice questions were appropriate and fair. The committee members generally concurred that this section of the examination set an appropriately demanding standard of achievement for graduating Social Studies 30 students. They found the data sources relevant and engaging and the questions challenging but fair.

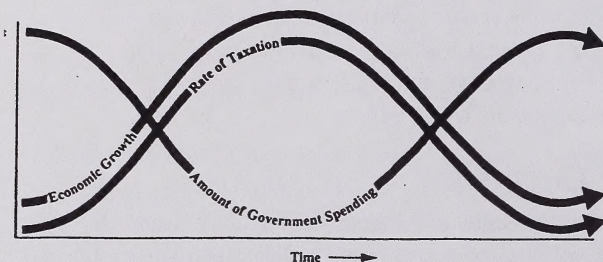
The following table gives results for five questions selected from the examination. The table shows the percentage of students in three groups answering each question correctly. The comments on pages 4 and 5 discuss some of the decisions that students may have made and some of the skills they may have used to answer these questions correctly.

Percentage of Students Correctly Answering Selected Multiple-Choice Questions

Student Group	Question Number					
	26	27	30	41	42	43
All students	72.7	68.8	68.6	37.8	75.0	73.3
Students achieving the <i>standard of excellence</i> (80% or higher, or A) on the whole examination	92.4	86.3	96.7	63.1	94.6	95.3
Students achieving the <i>acceptable standard</i> who received marks between 50% and 64%, or C, on the whole examination.	67.5	63.8	60.2	28.7	70.1	67.1

Use the following graph to answer questions 25 to 27.

Theoretical Relationships Among Economic Growth, Taxation, and Government Spending



26. As represented on this graph, government spending indicates an attempt on the part of many governments with market-oriented economies to

- A. avoid unnecessary regulation of boom and bust cycles
- *B. minimize the negative effects of boom and bust cycles
- C. eliminate the boom and bust cycles associated with production
- D. increase nationalization in the economy to prevent boom and bust cycles

27. Since the early 1980s, many democratic capitalist governments, through their actions, have **contradicted** the relationships shown in this graph by

- A. deregulating most industries to encourage greater competition
- B. increasing social assistance programs during times of high unemployment
- *C. failing to reduce spending during times of economic growth and prosperity
- D. decreasing corporate income taxes to encourage investment in the economy

30. Which statement is based on a **false** assumption regarding the nature of a public enterprise economy?

- A. Economic goals are largely determined by government planners.
- B. Allocation of goods and services is based on collective needs.
- C. Methods of production are determined through central planning.
- *D. Prices fluctuate according to supply and demand.

Questions 26 and 27 were two of a set of three questions based on a graph indicating a series of theoretical relationships among three economic factors. The trends shown in the graph are usually associated with the policies of the economist John Maynard Keynes. Both questions are classified as Interpretation/Analysis questions on Topic A.

To answer question 26 correctly, students had to analyze government spending in relation to the other two trends shown in the graph and determine why many governments with market-oriented economies have tended to operate in this way. Students did not find the question difficult: 72.7% of all students (92.4% of those students achieving the standard of excellence) answered correctly.

Question 27 required students to apply their analysis of the relationships shown in the graph to their recollection of recent actions of some western governments that have been inconsistent with the pattern of government spending indicated in the graph. This question, as well, did not prove to be difficult: 68.8% of all students (86.3% of those students achieving the standard of excellence) answered correctly.

The achievement results for these questions (and similar ones throughout the examination) are a credit to the critical thinking skills demonstrated by many Grade 12 Alberta social studies students in their approach to data presenting relatively sophisticated information and ideas.

Questions 30 tested students' ability to demonstrate their understanding of a key social studies concept—a public enterprise economy—by recognizing an incorrect assumption regarding its operation. The question is classified in the blueprint as a Comprehension question on Topic A. The fact that 68.6% of all students (96.7% of those students achieving the standard of excellence) chose the correct response suggests that many students are able to go beyond superficial knowledge to an adept understanding of underlying principles.

Japan	→	1931	→	Manchuria
Italy	→	1936	→	Abyssinia
Germany	→	1938	→	?

41. The country that completes this chart is

- A. France
- B. Poland
- *C. Austria
- D. Belgium

Use the following cartoon to answer questions 42 to 44.



—from the *London Evening Standard*

42. Which foreign policy, practiced by many European nations between the two world wars, is the cartoonist criticizing?

- A. Intervention in the domestic affairs of Germany
- B. Using collective force to ensure Germany's borders
- *C. Non-interference with Germany's aggressive actions
- D. Supporting the military-industrial growth of Germany

43. The development that inspired this cartoon was the

- A. demand for reparation payments from Germany
- *B. reoccupation of the Rhineland by German troops
- C. exclusion of Germany from the League of Nations
- D. invasion of the Soviet Union by German armed forces

Question 41 tested students' ability to complete a chart showing expansionist moves made by Japan, Italy, and Germany during the interwar years. Students were required to recall that in 1938, Germany annexed Austria. The question is classified in the blueprint as a Knowledge/Comprehension question on Topic B.

Interestingly, students found this question difficult, with only 37.8% of all students answering correctly. Many students (52.3%) wrongly concluded that Poland was the victim of German expansion in 1938. However, 63.1% of those achieving the standard of excellence answered correctly. The fact that many students chose an incorrect response for what was essentially a specific recall question should not suggest that their general knowledge of this era is necessarily clouded with misinformation, as the results for the following questions attest.

Questions 42 and 43, which also focused on the interwar years, were two of three questions based on a cartoon depicting Adolf Hitler threatening a group of cowering statesmen. Both questions are classified as Interpretation/Analysis questions on Topic B. To answer correctly, students had to demonstrate their knowledge and critical thinking skills by recognizing specific contextual detail and by determining the cartoonist's point of view. They had to apply their knowledge of certain key historical events and the direction of diplomacy from the interwar period.

The fact that 75.0% of all students (94.6% of those students achieving the standard of excellence) answered question 42 correctly suggests that they were able to recall without difficulty the tenor of much official European reaction to various maneuvers undertaken by Nazi Germany and to discern the cartoonist's critical response to them.

Many of these same students (73.3% of all students; 95.3% of those students achieving the standard of excellence) were able to choose the correct response for question 43. This suggests that they were able to comprehend the relationship between the point of view underlying the cartoon and the appropriate historical event that prompted its portrayal.

Part B: Written Response

The results for the written-response section of the Social Studies 30 Diploma Examination are tabulated according to the percentage of students achieving at each level (1 to 5) in each of the scoring categories. Each scoring category assesses somewhat different skills; consequently, individual student's scores are likely to vary from one category to another. Those students who achieve at or above the standard of excellence (80%) on the written-response section have scores of **(4) Proficient** or **(5) Excellent** for all scoring categories. Students just meeting the acceptable standard (50%) on the written-response section have scores of **(3) Satisfactory** for some scoring categories but produce **(2) Limited** work for others. Students who produce **(3) Satisfactory** work for all scoring categories receive scores of 18 out of 30 on Part B.

Readers will find the results most meaningful in the context of the assignment and the scoring descriptors. The most useful starting place for reviewing these results is at the **(3) Satisfactory** level. The scoring guides that describe proficiency levels are in the 1994–95 Social Studies 30 Information Bulletin.

The written-response section contributes 30% of the total examination mark. Students are required to write one complete and unified essay in which they discuss the importance and complexity of an issue and defend their position by using supportive, relevant evidence. The organization of arguments should show evidence of logical thought that should persuade the reader. Students are expected to make use of their critical and creative thinking skills to demonstrate complex and independent thought.

Part B: Written Response has a total value of 30 marks: 10 marks each for *Defence of Position* and *Quality of Examples* and five marks each for *Exploration of the Issue* and *Quality of Language and Expression*. The average raw score mean for Part B was 17.2 out of 30. By comparing school and jurisdiction results to provincial results presented here, teachers can determine areas of strength and weakness in the achievement of their students and, consequently, areas of potential strength and weakness in their programs.

It should be noted that beginning in January 1995, a two-marker system was adopted for marking Part B; this means that it is now possible for students to be awarded marks that are midway between scoring criteria. (See the following table.)

Examination Blueprint and Percentage Distribution of Scores

Scoring Category	Proportion of Total Mark (%)	Percentage Distribution of Scores									
		Excellent (5) (4.5)		Proficient (4) (3.5)		Satisfactory (3) (2.5)		Limited (2) (1.5)		Poor (1)	Ins*
Exploration of the Issue	5	1.9	3.1	10.0	12.2	24.3	20.6	19.2	6.2	2.3	0.2
Defence of Position	10	1.7	3.1	10.1	13.5	26.3	21.6	17.3	4.5	1.6	0.2
Quality of Examples	10	1.6	2.7	7.4	10.6	23.6	20.0	20.7	8.6	4.5	0.2
Quality of Language and Expression	5	2.1	3.6	13.5	16.9	37.9	15.7	7.9	1.6	0.4	0.2

* **Ins** (Insufficient) is a special category that includes students who did not attempt the assignment, who wrote too little to evaluate, or who wrote answers that were completely off topic.

Note: The shaded portion represents the percentage of students who achieved or exceeded a **(3) Satisfactory** level of performance.

Topic A

Some individuals believe that governments should use the principles of free enterprise to restructure their economies. Other individuals believe that this is not the best approach that governments should take.

Should governments use the principles of free enterprise to restructure their economies?

In your essay, take and defend a position on this issue.

Topic B

Some individuals believe that the possession of nuclear weapons by some nations today serves a useful purpose. Other individuals contend that all nuclear weapons should be dismantled and their development forbidden.

Are nuclear weapons necessary?

In your essay, take and defend a position on this issue.

Examiners' Comments

The results of the written component for the January 1995 examination showed the highest provincial average score yet achieved since the first administration of Social Studies 30 Diploma Examinations in 1984.

Growth in the effectiveness and thoughtfulness of the students' position papers is encouraging. Many markers and those teachers involved in standards confirmation commented on the increased length and thoroughness of many papers, especially those written for Topic A. Compared to previous years, most students made use of some pre-writing outline structure that included such approaches as comparison charts, point form outlines, and concept webs, thus refraining from attempting to complete a draft copy of their essay. More students appear to be effectively using the additional time available to them.

Encouragingly, longer papers often focused on a wide range of specific and relevant historical examples and case studies. Many writers are at ease with the vocabulary and concepts of social studies. Student responses, generally, reflected a sound understanding of the assigned topics and a considered, sometimes skillful, approach to the writing task. Many students exhibited a sense of personal "ownership" in their writing. As one marker commented, "many students chose to write on a particular topic because it struck an emotional or intellectual cord with them." This may help to explain why a significant majority of students were attracted to the Topic B assignment: the prospect of imminent thermonuclear destruction is understandably more morally compelling than the difficulties associated with economic restructuring.

Despite these positive general observations, a number of cautions regarding student achievement did emerge. Exploration of the issue remains problematic for many students who regard matters in clearly "black and white" terms. Elaboration of any perceived significance or complexity concerning an issue often evaporated into superficiality or understatement; for example, "nuclear weapons are very powerful weapons and are not used frequently." While students are certainly encouraged to incorporate ideas and detail from the multiple-choice section of the examination into their responses (and many appropriately do), there was too much evidence of verbatim copying and revealing misinterpretation of source material; for example, several students reported that 140 nations presently have nuclear weapons. A number of markers also drew attention to the difficulty some students have in knowing how much background material to present as part of their evidence. Rather than applying information and ideas in the development of sound argumentation, such students often presented much extraneous detail. Thus, many markers, in reading Topic B, were struck by the often quixotic variations revealed by some students in their descriptions of the saga of the Cuba Missile Crisis.

Many students, in dealing with Topic A, went beyond a simple comparison of economic systems and actually attempted to wrestle with the issue of economic change that is inherent in the term "restructuring." Students are to be commended for their insight into, and understanding of, some of the most conceptually challenging content of the curriculum. Not without surprise, many students referred in detail to the changes made by the Klein government in Alberta or the impending federal budget—real economic issues of direct relevance to their lives. Other students drew from broad historical case studies ranging from Lenin's New Economic Policy to Roosevelt's New Deal. More contemporary examples, such as the movement from socialist planning to free-market in Eastern Europe, were developed with less elaboration and, in fairness, likely all outside the scope of major course textbooks. Still, it is encouraging to see the introduction of accurate supportive evidence from current events.

As noted, many students dealing with Topic B regarded the issue as a moral imperative and did not admit of any qualification or shades of grey. Quite simply, the most common theme was that nuclear war would destroy the Earth, and nuclear weapons must not fall into the hands of "mad men." These points were commonly supported by horrific descriptions of the atomic bombing of Japan. Some students did not always grasp that eliminating nuclear arsenals would not necessarily bring about global peace or harmony. Thus, the key factor that distinguished the stronger papers in Topic B was their treatment of the complexity of the issue. Such stronger papers were likely to discuss the problems of proliferation, the monitoring of arms control, or that the demise of the Cold War did not herald a necessarily safer world. In general, controlled argumentation, coupled with qualified positions, enhanced the persuasiveness of confident and superior papers. Such writing is a compliment to the degree of intellectual maturity of many of our students and to the success of social studies teachers.

Students achieving the acceptable standard were able to express an adequate understanding of the complexity and significance of an issue. These writers often recognized the principles underlying different viewpoints associated with an issue and generally established an historical or a contemporary frame of reference to an issue's importance. Students achieving the standard of excellence perceptively investigated the complexity and significance of the issue, often throughout the fabric of their response. Such students were comfortable in revealing to the reader what they genuinely thought, rather than attempting to write what they felt the reader wanted to hear.

As in the previous administrations, many students demonstrated an awareness that a stronger position paper is developed by establishing a basis for each argument or reason and then applying specific historical and contemporary examples as supportive evidence for each argument. Students achieving the acceptable standard supported their position with several adequate arguments. Although these arguments lacked in elaboration and depth of understanding, they were connected to the issue under discussion and to the position taken. Supportive evidence used by these writers to bolster an argument was generally relevant but not error free, and more often general rather than specific in presentation. Such writers, despite making minor errors, demonstrated control of conventions.

Students achieving below the acceptable standard did not link their examples in a meaningful way to their positions and often exhibited vagueness and confusion with key social studies concepts. They developed evidence primarily in descriptive terms, unloading as much data as they could recall and thus exhibiting little sense of its organization and applicability. Superficial descriptions of detail and the presentation of extraneous information resulted in lower scores. Students achieving below the satisfactory level demonstrated poor control of conventions.

Students achieving the standard of excellence composed powerful and forceful arguments that were firmly rooted in the application of germane, well-chosen evidence—evidence that in many instances supported a qualified position. Students at this level wrote carefully organized essays essentially free from errors in mechanics and grammar.

Overall, it was apparent that the demands of the January 1995 assignments were within the comprehension of most students. It was also apparent that many students enjoyed the challenge of composing their responses.

***Comparison of Students' Results
on Parts A and B***

	Part A	Part B
A	25.1%	10.0%
B	30.1%	18.6%
C	28.1%	42.8%
F	16.7%	28.6%

While it is not intended that parts A and B of the examination be considered as separate examinations or that each part necessarily tests the same curricular objectives, it is interesting to see the distribution of student results. In January 1995, considerably more students were awarded scores in the "A" category on Part A of the examination than on Part B, and considerably more students were awarded scores in the "F" category on Part B of the examination than on Part A. These scores do not signal a new phenomenon but represent similar results achieved over past administrations.

Readers are reminded that a new Samples of Student Writing document based on essays written from this administration should be available for the spring of 1995.

For further information, contact Barry Jonas or Elana Scraba at the Student Evaluation Branch, 403-427-0010.